

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2756

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E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, CE

SUBJ ASIA FOUNDATION REPRESENTATIVE'S VISIT

1. LOUISE LAZAROFF, ASIA FOUNDATION REPRESENTATIVE FROM SAN FRANCISCO, CALLED ON AMBASSADOR AND AID REPRESENTATIVE KANRICH MAY 16 TO DISCUSS REVIVAL OF ASIA FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES IN SRI LANKA. FIRST WORD EMBASSY HAD RECEIVED OF LAZAROFF VISIT WAS HAND-WRITTEN LETTER FROM LAZAROFF TO AID REPRESENTATIVE, RECEIVED ON EVE OF HIS ARRIVAL, IN WHICHHE SAID HE PLANNED VISIT COLOMBO AS PART OF ASIA FOUNDATION'S RESUMING SUPPORT TO SELECTED INSTITUTIONS IN THE COUNTRY, BUT ON A NON-RESIDENT BASIS".

2. LAZAROFF, WHO WAS ASIA FOUNDATION REPRESENTATIVE IN SRI LANKA 1959-62, TLD AMBASSADOR AND AID REPRESENTATIVE THAT FOUNDATION HAD BEEN ENCOURAGED IN THIS DIRECTION BY AID/WASHINGTON. HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER AID OFFICIALS HAD CONSULTED STATE DEPARTMENT.

LAZAROFF WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT, IN ADVANCE OF HIS ARRIVAL IN COLOMBO,HE HAD COR CORRESPONDED WITH FORMER FRIENDS HERBERT TENNEKOON CHAIRMAN OF CENTRAL BANK, AND RALPH DERANIYAGALA, FORMER CLERK OF NATIONAL STATE ASSEMBLY. PREVIOUS DAY (MAY 16) HAD DISCUSSED WITH BOTH TENNEKOON AND DERANIYAGALA, AS WELL AS SAM WIJESINHA, INCUMBENT CLERK OF NSA, PROSPECTS FOR RESUMING

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FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES. TENNEKOON HAD SUGGESTED

HE SEE ACTING PRIME MINISTER MAITHRIPALA SENANAYEKE, WHOM LAZAROFF HAD ALSO KNOWN PREVIOUSLY. LAZAROFF CONTACTED SENANAYEKE AND HAS ARRANGED MEETING WITH HIM MORNING MAY 17.

3. AMBASSADOR TOLD LAZAROFF THAT, IN HIS JUDGMENT, ASIA FOUNDATION HAD PERFORMED SOME VERY VALUABLE WORK IN SRI LANKA AND WAS STILL WELL-REMEMBERED IN MANY QUARTERS. HOWEVER, PRESENT UNITED FRONT GOVERNMENT HAD ATTACKED FOUNDATION'S ACTIVITIES DURING 1970 ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND, AS LAZAROFF WAS AWARE, HAD ASKED FOR FOUNDATION TO CLOSE UP ITS OPERATIONS ON MID-1970. IN VIEW BANDARANAIKE GOVERNMENTS SENSITIVITY TOWARD THESE EARLIER ACTIVITIES, HE WAS FRANKLY SURPRISED THAT LAZAROFF HAD BEEN ENCOURAGED TO VISIT COLOMBO WITHOUT CHECK HAVING FIRST BEEN MADE WITH STATE DEPT AND WITH EMBASSY. NOTING THAT LAZAROFF HAD MET WITH NUMBER OF OLD FRIENDS PREVIOUS DAY AND HAD ARRANGED MEET WITH ACTING PRIME MINISTER FOLLOWING DAY, AMB SAID PREFERRED PROCEDURE WOULD BE TO HAVE DISCUSSED MATTER WITH EMBASSY IN ADVANCE, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW LAZAROFF'S EXPLANATION THAT 85 PERCENT OF ASIA FOUNDATION'S FUNDS CAME FROM US GOVERNMENT SOURCES (AID AND CU).

4. AMB THEN SAID THAT, BECAUSE OF CURRENT DELICATE POLITICAL SITUATION, IT WAS HIGHLY UNLIKELY GSL, UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WOULD APPROVE RESUMPTION ASIA FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES. IT WAS AGREED THAT SINCE LAZAROFF HAD PREVIOUSLY KNOWN SENANAYEKE IT WOULD BE AWKWARD TO CANCEL APPOINTMENT FOLLOWING MORNING, BUT AMB SPECIFICALLY ASKED LAZAROFF NOT TO MAKE ANY REQUEST TO SENANAYEKE FOR ASIA FOUNDATION REINSTATEMENT.

5. COMMENT: AS NOTED BY AMB'S REMARKS TO LAZAROFF, WE FIND IT SOMEWHAT EXTRAORDINARY THAT HE SHOULD
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ARRIVE IN COLOMBO AND ARRANGE APPOINTMENT WITH ACTING PRIME MINISTER WITHOUT EMBASSY EITHER BEING INFORMED OR CONSULTED IN ADVANCE. WOULD APPRECI- ATE SOONEST INFO FROM DEPT AS TO HOW THIS UNUSUAL VISITATION DEVELOPED. WE ARE HAVING ENOUGH PROBLEMS AT PRESENT SO PLEASE PROTECT US FROM OUR UNANNOUNCED AND UNGUIDED FRIENDS.

VAN HOLLEN

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